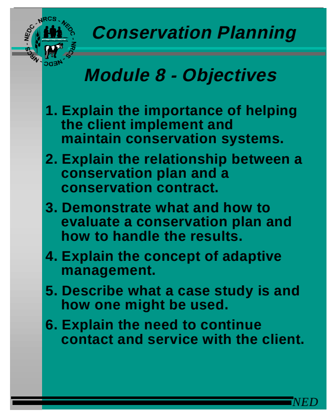
Module 8

Phase III of the Planning Process

Objectives

At the end of this module, the participant will be able to:

1. Explain the importance of helping the client implement and maintain conservation systems.
2. Explain the relationship between a conservation plan and a conservation contract.
3. Demonstrate what and how to evaluate a conservation plan and how to handle the results.
4. Explain the concept of adaptive management.
5. Describe what a case study is and how one might be used.
6. Explain the need to continue contact and service with the client.



Training Aids

Two Flip Charts

Overhead Projector

Existing conservation plan and record of implementation of follow-up assistance provided since the plan was developed.

Method of Instruction

Presentation, Discussion, and Field Exercise

Total Time

16 Hours

Module 8—Table of Contents
Phase III of the Planning Process

Module 8—Table of Contents (cont.)
Phase III of the Planning Process

Module 8—Phase III of the Planning Process
(Classroom and Field)

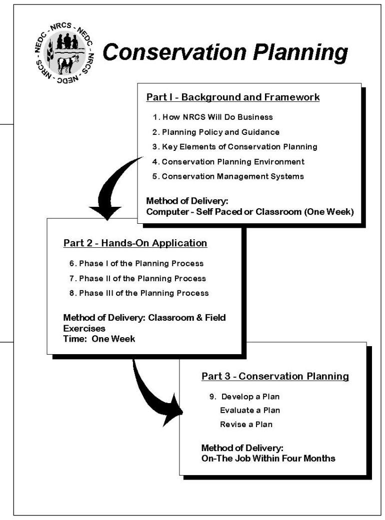
Instructor Note

***Classroom* - approximately 1 hour**

The following is a suggested list of key items to cover, briefly, in the classroom, in regard to phase III of the planning process.

States can tailor this list to meet their specific needs and are encouraged to develop site specific examples to illustrate key points.

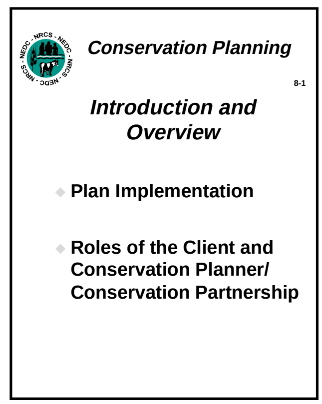
I. Introduction and Overview



Instructor Note and Module 'Flow Chart' Overhead

Display the overhead of the course module flow chart to track the progression of the course.

Overhead #8-1



A. Plan implementation is synonymous with:

- Follow-up
- Follow-up
- Follow-up—Which means.....Service, Service, Service

  This is an excellent opportunity to practice an important sales technique......deliver more than what is expected.

  It is critical to maintain contact with the client and schedule technical assistance to help carry out the plan.

B. Review the roles of the client and the conservation planner/conservation partnership. Discuss them as needed with the client.

- The client's role....

  - Makes the decisions
  - Implements the plan
  - Hires and deals directly with the contractor
  - Obtains needed permits, easements, etc.
  - Keeps the plan up to date and on schedule
  - Meets practice specifications and program requirements
  - Meets regulatory requirements
  - Provides proper operation and maintenance of installed practices and systems
  - Provides documentation needed for program or contract payments
  - Carries out the terms and conditions of any conservation contracts
  - Evaluates the practices and systems installed in order to meet the needs of the resources and the objectives of the client.

- The role of the conservation planner / conservation partnership....

  - Helps the client monitor and evaluate the practices and systems installed

- Provides technical assistance
- Provides program assistance
- Provides survey, design, layout, and/or certification of practices
- Helps develop operation and maintenance plans
- Provides technical information for permit applications
- Helps the client keep the conservation plan and conservation contract current
- Assists the client with documentation for program or contract payments
- Helps process the paperwork for program cost share payments
- Helps the client address regulatory requirements

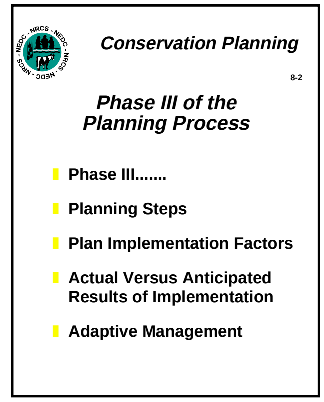
II. Phase III of the Planning Process

A. Phase III of the planning process....

- Is the implementation and evaluation portion of the planning process.
- Provides feedback on the effectiveness of the plan and installed systems.

Overhead #8-2

B. Phase III of the planning process consists of two planning steps:



8. Implement the Plan
9. Evaluate the Plan

- Without implementation the conservation benefits and the client's objectives are not realized.
- Without feedback, such as through an evaluation of the plan, the planner, the planning process, plan implementation, technical knowledge, and conservation application may not improve.

C. Factors to keep in mind on plan implementation include:

- Work with the client to utilize, as appropriate, conservation contracts and programs as implementation tools to help carry out the conservation plan.
- Work with the client to explain standards and specifications, i.e., what, where, when, why, and how.
- Provide and explain copies of job sheets, engineering drawings, designs, fact sheets, etc.
- Provide practice design and layout as necessary, on-site technical assistance, and follow-up with construction or progress checks as appropriate.
- Help assure that individual practices and systems are applied and operated properly.
- Work with the client to reach an understanding of operation and maintenance.

Question

What can happen if a conservation plan or contract is not kept up to date?

- Conservation benefits are not realized
- Resource sustainability is threatened
- The plan is not installed according to schedule
- Delaying practice installation has a domino affect on subsequent practices scheduled for installation
- Excessive modifications to the contract may become necessary
- Practices may not be operated or maintained properly
- Practices may be destroyed
- The client may be found to be in noncompliance
- Noncompliance may lead to a contract violation
- A contract violation may lead to a refund of cost share payments and / or termination of the contract
- Program benefits may be foregone
- Hard feelings develop

Question

How can plans, especially conservation contracts, be kept up to date?

- Frequent communication with the client.
- A thorough on-site review of the plan / contract at least once per year with the client. Determine the progress toward carrying out the plan and meeting the client's objectives.
- A review of the implementation schedule for the year with the client, especially at the beginning of each year (well before major farm / ranch work begins).
- A periodic review of the practices and systems that have been installed to remind the client that they need to be maintained.
- Periodic correspondence regarding the plan and contract.
- Include statements of the critical terms and conditions of the contract on contract modifications, for example, "All practices installed, or to be installed, are to be maintained until the termination date of the contract."
- Follow-up on a regular basis will lead to fully applied plans.

Conducting an annual status review is an extremely important step in keeping conservation plans and conservation contracts up to date. All aspects of the conservation plan and conservation contract are thoroughly reviewed at that time, on-site, with the client. Revisions to the conservation plan and the conservation contract, as appropriate, are generally made at that time, as a result of the status review.

Question

Why do we evaluate the results of the plan implementation?

- To learn.
- To determine if the installed practices and systems are solving the identified problems and meeting the client's objectives.
- To observe operation and maintenance of installed practices and make adjustments if necessary.
- To compare the actual effects and impacts, as a result of plan implementation, in relation to the effects and impacts that were projected.
- To determine the client's acceptance and satisfaction with the conservation treatment applied and the technical assistance provided.
- To adjust technical materials in the FOTG and other references.
- To modify standards and specifications, if needed.
- To assess the quality of technical assistance provided.
- To determine accountability, from an agency standpoint. For the money spent, did we accomplish what we said we were going to accomplish?

D. Where the actual results of the evaluation differ from those anticipated....

- Provide feedback into the planning process. This could include....
  - Revision of quality criteria
  - Modification of indicators and target values
  - Changes to current practice standards and specifications
  - Updated CPPE and guidance documents
  - Revision of other FOTG materials
  - Updated conservation plan effects
- Modify or revise the plan as needed

E. What is adaptive management?

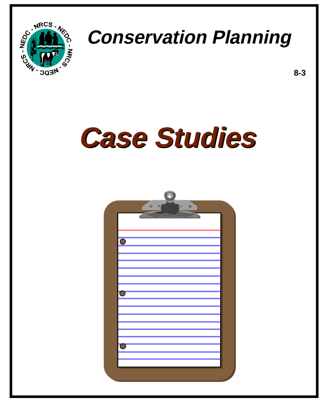
Adaptive management is the process of monitoring, evaluating, and experimenting in order to add to resource management information and modify decisions. Some key items to keep in mind are:

- Our knowledge of ecological systems and their interactions is not complete. However, our knowledge of the natural world is growing daily because of what we learn through the conservation planning process.
- The art and science of natural resource management will continue to evolve and will never be complete or finished.
- While our knowledge is incomplete, we still provide assistance based on the best available technical information.
- Monitoring, evaluating, and experimenting helps us increase our knowledge base.
- Monitoring, evaluating and experimenting does not have to be a formal process. It can be as simple as observation or as extensive as laboratory analysis.

III. Case Studies

A. Case Studies

Overhead #8-3



- What are they?

  Case studies are a way of observing, collecting, and documenting the practical results of conservation treatment, along with the motivations that lead to their adoption. They help us increase the technology base we work from to plan and implement conservation systems.

- What are the various types of case studies?

  1. A comparison of the "before and after treatment" conditions on a single site.

  2. A comparison of two separate but comparable resources and land use situations (sites) on different farms/ranches or even on the same farm/ranch (i.e. one site with and one site without treatment).

  3. A simple recording of farmer or rancher experiences with treatment on a single site regardless of earlier conditions.

- How can they be used?

  - To gather resource treatment information that may be unique or lacking.

  - To verify or modify anticipated effects from conservation treatment.

  - To utilize the information gathered to improve technical guidance.

  - To determine what motivates the client to apply certain treatments.

- To experiment (not research) with ideas and techniques that may prove useful.

- To share this information with other colleagues and clients - technology transfer.

- Should we develop a formal case study as a part of every conservation plan?

  - No. Utilize case studies where appropriate to obtain additional information and where the client is willing to dedicate the time, effort, and resources to participate in the effort. Professional judgement on the part of the planner is needed to make that decision, taking into consideration time availability, resources available to conduct the study, the need for the study, the feasibility of conducting the study, etc.

  - Informally every conservation plan provides information to feed back into the planning process and technical knowledge base of the partnership.

- Examples of case studies.

Instructor Note

Each state should include a couple of examples of case studies relevant to their area.

Example 1

Example 2

Instructor Note

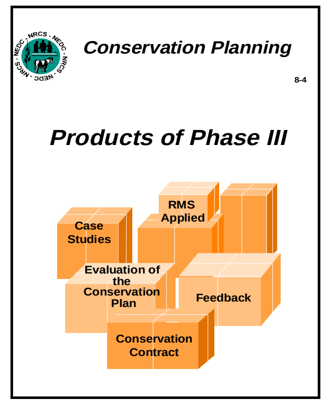
For those states where case studies are encouraged and are being conducted, this is a good place to briefly review the state's expectations, procedures, etc., for conducting case studies and where that guidance information is located for future reference.

IV. Products of Phase III

Question

What are the key products expected from phase III of the planning process?

Overhead #8-4

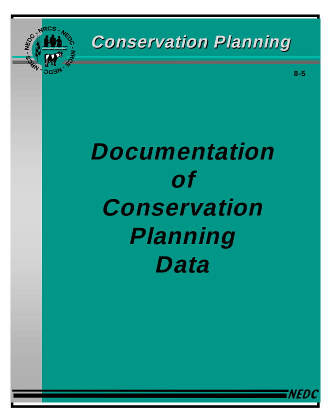


- Conservation contract, where applicable
- Resource management systems applied
- Conservation benefits realized
- An evaluation of the conservation plan
- Case studies, where appropriate
- Plan revision and/or contract modification, where appropriate
- Documentation of evaluation findings
- Feedback into the planning process and technical materials

V. Documentation of Conservation Planning Data

A. What to document in either hard copy or electronic format

Overhead #8-5



- Applied practices
- Conservation Contract Modifications
- Revised record of decisions and updated effects and impacts
- Assistance notes
- Status reviews - FSA and contracts
- Correspondence with the client

Field Exercise—Classroom Portion

Instructor Note

This is an example of how the field exercise could be set up and conducted.

States can tailor the field exercise, both the classroom portion and the field portion, to meet their specific needs.

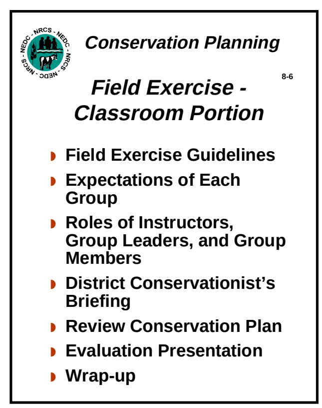
Field Exercise - Classroom Portion - approximately .5 hour

Instructor Note

Discuss how the field exercise will be conducted.

Field Exercise Guidelines

Overhead #8-6



- General logistical guidelines for the field exercise in Modules 6 and 7 are applicable here. The primary difference is that a complete conservation plan was developed in Modules 6 and 7. In this module the participants will be evaluating progress toward implementing a plan previously developed, and determining from the client whether additional assistance is needed.

- The field exercise will be held on a farm/ranch that is well into implementation of a conservation plan.

Instructor Note

> ***States may want to select a farm/ranch that also has some type of a conservation contract as an extension of the conservation plan.***

- Participants and group leaders should remain in their same groups as the previous two modules. The group leaders should stay with their group throughout this portion of the planning process.
- An instructor is assigned to each land use and should stay on that site / land use as the groups rotate from site to site / land use to land use.
- The groups should first assemble with the instructor, for discussion purposes, whenever visiting a site / land use for the first time.
- The instructors should serve as the substitute client for their respective land use.

Expectations of Each Group

- Complete planning steps 8 and 9 as a group.
- Complete the appropriate planning documentation - one set for the group.
- Full participation by all members.

Roles of the instructors, group leaders, and group members.

- The instructors provide the classroom instruction and the instruction in the field relative to their particular site and land use on the farm/ranch. The instructors also serve as the substitute client, for the field exercise, to answer questions and provide information to the groups as needed or requested.

- The group leaders help guide their assigned group through this phase of the planning process and help facilitate the teaching and learning experience. The group leader should strive to involve all participants in the activities and discussions.

- The group members carry out phase III of the planning process on this unit and share their planning experience and knowledge with the rest of the group. Individual group members may lead the group through the evaluation for their discipline, i.e., range conservationist / range inventory and forage balance.

District Conservationist Briefing

The local district conservationist should provide a brief classroom review of the farm/ranch unit to be evaluated, such as the type of conservation plan in effect, the conservation contract if one exists, the type and size of the unit, background information on the farm family, progress in carrying out the plan, and the relationship of the farm/ranch to the local area.

Review Conservation Plan

Each group should thoroughly review the conservation plan and the conservation contract before going to the field. The DC or conservationist that has been servicing that plan should be available to answer questions.

Evaluation Presentation

At the end of the field exercise, one member of each group should present their evaluation to the substitute client in the presence of the entire class - the class will have the opportunity to ask questions and comment on the evaluation of the conservation plan and conservation contract.

Wrap-Up

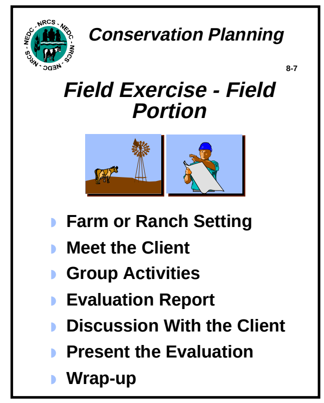
Determine if each group has met the planning standards for steps 8 and 9.

Field Exercise—Field Portion

Approximately 15 Hours

Farm/Ranch Setting

Overhead #8-7



Conduct a field reconnaissance of the area / community around the planning unit. Each group should travel in a different vehicle, with an instructor and their group leader, for better discussion opportunities. The instructor will expand on the relationship of the local area to the farm/ranch than what was covered in the classroom by the DC, from an on-the-ground perspective, since the group will be seeing and experiencing the area firsthand for the first time. To the extent possible, include a drive-by initial observation of the farm/ranch unit to be evaluated.

Meet the Client

The entire class should meet the client at a designated spot and receive an overview of the unit from the client - operation, ownership, type of business, size of the unit, history of the unit, the problems, opportunities, and concerns the client is trying to address with the conservation plan, the client's objectives, and progress in carrying out the plan. This should include ecological, economic and social perspectives. The participants should have an opportunity to have an open discussion with the client and ask questions.

Instructor Note

The instructors should work with the client ahead of time to help craft what needs to be covered by the client and what needs to not be said. The participants should ask questions to draw out information that is not covered by the client. The instructors need to be prepared to help stimulate the discussion / questions as needed.

Group Activities

Each group should meet separately to compare notes on the current situation with the conservation plan and contract, and to discuss their approach to conducting the evaluation of the plan.

Each group should then, independently, conduct the inventories, measurements, discussions, etc., needed to determine:

- The progress in implementing the plan.
- The status of the conservation contract.
- The effects and impacts of the applied practices and systems.
- If the identified problems are being solved.
- If any identified opportunities are being realized.
- If the objectives of the client are being met.
- Whether the indicators and target values are valid - moving in the right direction.
- If the quality criteria is being met.
- If any new problems or opportunities have developed.
- If any revisions are needed in the plan.
- If any modifications are needed with the conservation contract.
- If any adjustments are needed in technical materials.

Instructor Note

The instructors should each stay on the site they are handling and cover appropriate material relative to Phase III of the planning process as the groups rotate, one at a time, to each site / land use. One instructor will handle cropland, another rangeland, etc. There needs to be at least as many sites / land uses as there are groups rotating. See the following example of how this could be organized.

Example:

Group	Site Rotation	Group Leader
A	1,2,3,4,5,6	(name)
B	2,3,4,5,6,1	(name)
C	3,4,5,6,1,2	(name)
D	4,5,6,1,2,3	(name)
E	5,6,1,2,3,4	(name)

Sites	Land Use	Fields	Instructor / Substitute Client
1	Cropland	1, 4, 8	(name 1)
2	Hayland	7, 10	(name 2)
3	Pastureland	2, 3, 11	(name 3)
4	Rangeland	5, 6	(name 4)
5	Woodland	9	(name 5)
6	Headquarters	12	(name 6)

The group leader rotates with the group from site to site to provide guidance and support as the group conducts the evaluation of the farm/ranch.

The instructors cover their materials at each site first and then the group conducts the inventory of the resources in those fields associated with that land use. The instructors also need to be available to the group as the substitute client to answer questions, etc.

Items for the instructor to cover:

<u>Cropland</u>

Crop rotation

Yields

Nutrient management

Soil testing information

Quality criteria

Practices or systems installed

Evaluation considerations

<u>Hayland</u>

Establishment date

Yields

Nutrient management

Quality criteria

Practices or systems installed

Evaluation considerations

Pastureland

Establishment date

Grazing system used

Forage production

Forage demand

Nutrient management

Wildlife habitat

Quality criteria

Practices or systems installed

Evaluation considerations

Rangeland

Grazing system used

Condition and trend

Forage production

Forage demand

Productivity

Wildlife habitat

Quality criteria

Practices or systems installed

Evaluation considerations

Woodland

Wildlife habitat

Quality criteria

Practices or systems installed

Evaluation considerations

Headquarters

Water supply

Livestock waste management

Quality criteria

Practices or systems installed

Evaluation considerations

Note: Threatened and Endangered Species, Cultural Resources, and Wetlands may fit into discussions of each of the landuses listed above.

Each group conducts the needed inventories, measurements, discussions, etc., on the entire farm/ranch by rotating from site to site, field to field, across the unit.

Instructor Note

States should preview the planning unit well in advance, determine what inventories, measurements, etc., will likely be needed, and have the appropriate tools and worksheets available (field exercise notebook) for the participants to use. For those inventories that may be too time consuming to do during the course, the instructors may complete part of the inventory work prior to the course and supply that information to the groups as they rotate to their site.

Resource Inventory Considerations:

Soil

Erosion

Condition

Deposition

Water

Quantity

Quality

Air

Quality

Condition

Plants

Suitability

Condition

Management

Animals

Habitat

Management

Economic Inventory Data:

Family Farm

Land

Labor

Capital

Management

Other

Social Inventory Data:

Farm Family

Cultural Resources

Client Characteristics

Community Characteristics

Evaluation Report

Each group completes a report on the evaluation of the conservation plan and conservation contract.

Discussion With the Client

The substitute client for each group for the final portion of the field exercise is as follows:

Group	Instructor / Substitute Client
A	(name 1)
B	(name 2)
C	(name 3)
D	(name 4)
E	(name 5)

Each group confers with their substitute client (listed above) on the results and recommendations of the evaluation. The report is then finalized based on the input of the substitute client.

Present the Evaluation

At the end of the field exercise, one member of each group should present their evaluation to the substitute client in the presence of the entire class. The class will have the opportunity to ask questions and comment on the evaluation of the conservation plan and conservation contract. The real client may be invited to participate in this session.

Wrap-Up

Determine if each group has met the planning standards for planning steps 8 and 9.